REMARKS

The Office Action mailed 06/04/2004 (hereinafter referred to as the OA) has been received, and its contents carefully studied. The applicant presents this response and amendment which applicant believes is fully responsive to the OA.

The applicant further believes that for the reasons set out below, the currently pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests consideration for same.

Response To Claim Objections

The claims have been amended to address the errors pointed out on page 1 of the OA. Applicant thanks the Examiner for her corrections. Because of the amendments, Applicant believes the amended claims has overcome the claims objections thereby.

Response To Double Patenting

Applicant is submitting, with this response, a terminal disclaimer as between US Patent 6,652,380 and this application, addressing the double patenting issue thereby.

Rejections Under 35 USC §103(a)

Pending claims 1 – 15 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Burns et al. (US Patent 6,048,269, hereinafter Burns). Applicant will respond to the rejections of independent claims 1, 6, 10, and 12 before addressing the rejection of the pending dependent claims.

Application believes independent claims 1, 6, 10, and 12 are patentable over Burns, having a combination of elements both (i) not each individually taught or shown in Burns and (ii) not shown nor configurable in the functional combination claimed. At least one difference is that the pending claims specifically require that the transactional identifier be generated by a terminal.

Before addressing specific rejections, Applicant feels it may be helpful to present an overview of Burns' system; this provides the background to make the difference between Burns' and the claimed invention clearer.

Summary Of Burns: Central System Generates All Data For Tickets; There Is No Data Generated By Terminals Including Transaction IDs

Burns discloses a gaming system having a central server ("CPU" or "Host CPU" in Burns) and gaming machines, where the player may insert cash-out slips into the gaming machine and where the gaming machine passing all information thereon to a central server for processing. The Burns' gaming machine also has a printer usable to print cash-

out slips, where the data to be printed is generated by the central server (see generally Burns' claims; also see, e.g., col. 2, lines 32-47).

The gaming machine (player terminal) or cashier's terminal does not process or generate any information in Burns; the information on a cash-out slip, or used to generate a cash-out slip, is sent directly (in bar code form) to and received from the central server. In particular note that the printing of a cash-out slip is completely controlled by the central server, including all data and information being encoded in bar code format prior to sending to a gaming machine. Thus, all ticket printing ("cash-out slip" printing) and all data read from tickets is sent to/from and controlled by a central server (see generally Figure 1) connected to gaming machines via a network (col. 5, lines 8-15; col. 6 lines 21-36). Thus, the terminals in Burns send all information read from a ticket directly (without decoding and extracting the transaction ID) to the central server and the central server sends control information (including game credits - col. 5, lines 31-39) or information to be printed on a cash-out slip to the printer on the game machine already encoded into bar code form (col. 6, lines 21-46).

Burns also discloses cash-out machines, which send the information read from the ticket to the central system as do the gaming machines (player terminals). Burns' central system either validates the ticket and send control information back to the cash-out machine which contains the specific codes needed to trigger the dispensing of a prescribed amount of cash, or the ticket is declared invalid (col. 7, lines 5-29).

Burns further discloses the use of a random number, generated by the central system and only used by the central system, as the method by which unique tickets identifiers can be generated. The tickets each have the random number and value of the ticket (encoded into bar code format by the central server) recorded on the ticket itself (col. 6, lines 21-36).

Burns' central server or central computer (called a "CPU" or "Host CPU" in his disclosure) and not any terminal of any kind, does the following:

(i) generates any and all information to be printed on a pay-out stub (ticket) including the unique ticket ID;

(ii) validates the ticket ID and the ticket value on tickets that are read by the ticket reader on a gaming machine by comparing the value read from the ticket with the value stored on the central system; and,

(iii) sets any game credits derived from any tickets on each gaming machine.

Burns does not teach or suggest a gaming machine that can generate a unique identifier, nor a gaming machine that can read and interpret (decode) the tickets input at the game machine, as does the present invention. In Burns there is no processing done by the gaming machine, including without limitation: no data generation or data being acted upon; no ID generation; no decoding and/or decrypting of the tickets in order to process

the information by the gamine machine; or, any similar functionality. The Burns' gaming machines are pass-through devices for the information on a ticket; this means the Burns' gaming machines pass data to and from the ticket reader/printer without acting on it or understanding it.

The Claimed System: Substantively Different Than Burns

The system and elements of the presently claimed invention differ markedly from Burns. The claimed system has terminal devices (including exchange terminals, cashier terminals, player terminals and the like) where the terminals generate unique transaction IDs to uniquely identify each voucher (amongst other actions). The claimed system has a central server having a database configured to store individual transaction data (corresponding to a voucher) using the unique transaction numbers generated by the terminals and used as an identifier in the database. Burns does not teach any terminal actions, including no teaching or disclosure showing any aspect of terminals being able to generate transaction IDs for vouchers. The terminals of the presently claimed invention are active devices and the central server does not generate transaction numbers (this is the opposite of what Burns discloses and teaches). The central server of the present invention has the database having transaction IDs and associated data thereon; the central server does not generate IDs nor decode bar coded information as does Burns central server.

The claimed system as a whole, as well as the specific elements therein including the terminal and server elements, are thus not disclosed or taught by Burns. The claimed terminals are not pass-through devices, as those in Burns are. The claimed terminal devices are enabled to issue vouchers by generating the unique transaction numbers (transaction IDs) used on the vouchers; additionally, the claimed terminals can read vouchers and interpret the raw data thereon, extracting and then sending transaction IDs and associated data as such (not as raw bar code data as in Burns, but as the transaction ID and the associated data already decoded from the bar code) to a central server. The central server in the currently pending claims stores the transaction ID generated by a terminal; it does not generate transaction IDs nor does it read and decode raw bar code data.

This overview presented some distinct and important differences between the claimed invention and Burns. The claimed invention has terminals that generate transaction identifiers without making use of a central server for that function. The central server having the database of the presently claimed invention has a database thereon used to simply store transaction identifiers and associated data generation by terminals or extracted from vouchers by terminals.

The terminals and central server of the present invention are thus different elements than are taught in Burns, having different functional capabilities. In addition,

the claimed system as a whole (all the elements put together) functions differently than Burns' system.

Specific Rejection Under 35 USC §103

Independent claims 1, 6, 10 and 12 are rejected as unpatentable under Burns. Applicant will address one clear distinction between the presently claimed invention and Burns (not taught or disclosed in Burns). The OA states the following (page 3, paragraph 3a):

> "... As per claim 1 ... to receive and to send cashless voucher indicia to a network, to receive data from the network, and to send cash value to the cash dispenser ..."

This statement misses important limitations disclosed and taught in Burns. As part of the teaching in Burns, Burns discloses that a gaming machine (a player terminal) sends all the raw data to a central server (does not do anything to any data read on its ticket reader, and does not generate any data usable on a printed ticket). This statement also misses an important limitation of the pending claim.

The Burns disclosure goes to great length in explaining and teaching that all matter printed on cash-out slips at the terminals is/are generated by (originate from) the central system (called the "CPU" in Burns). Exemplar quotes include:

> "... A central processing unit (CPU) generates the unique codes for ... the validity of the free play coupons ..." extracted from the Abstract;

> "... The slot machine also includes a printer that prints and dispenses cash out slips having the value of the cash out slip represented by a bar code. The printer is controlled by a Central Processing Unit (CPU) ... The CPU is located in a secured office at the casino ... The bar code representing the value of the ... cash out slip ... is augmented by a unique control number randomly generated by the CPU ..." extracted from col. 2, lines 43-60; and,
>
> "... printer 208 [*on a terminal*] prints bar code 222 on the cash out slips 220 responsive to the instructions from the CPU 100. The CPU 100 generates the bar code to be printed. ... Since the CPU 100 has randomly generated the unique identification ..." extracted from col. 6, lines 21-40 (italicized words added for clarity).

Similar quotes may be found throughout the disclosure. Thus, Burns' does not disclose or teach that terminals have the ability or could be used to generate transaction identifiers in any way. The presently claimed invention is centered on this functionality of its terminals (player terminals and cashier or voucher terminals); that restriction as part of each independent claim and is found as the following claims language in claims 1 and 5:

> "...where said transaction identifier was previously generated by a player terminal or an exchange terminal..."

This limits the presently claimed invention to only those systems where a terminal rather than a central system generates transaction identifiers (in Burns, ONLY the central system generates transaction identifiers). To do this, the entire system has be architected differently than Burns' system, and additionally there must be intelligence built into the terminals of the present system which requires significantly different engineering as compared to the terminals disclosed and taught in Burns. These significant differences are not disclosed or taught by Burns.

The OA also states that:

"... the identification is printed (i.e., generated) by the exchange terminal ..." AO, bottom of page 3 and top of page 4.

Respectfully, this is an incorrect statement. Printing information that was previously generated on another computer does make the printer the originator of the information. If that were true, then that would be the same as saying that since you printed a document on a shared printer in an office, the printer generated (was the originator) of the information found in the document (even though you wrote it as an original work on your PC, and sent the document to the shared printer to be printed).

Applicant makes note of the following definition of "generate":

Generate \Gen"er*ate\, v. t. [imp. & p. p. Generated; p. pr. & vb. n. Generating.] [L. generatus, p. p. of generare to generate, fr. genus. See Genus, Gender.]

1. To beget; to procreate; to propagate; to produce (as being similar to the parent); to engender; as, every animal generates its own species.

2. To cause to be; to bring into life.

3. To originate, especially by a vital or chemical process; to produce; to cause.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, © 1996, 1998 MICRA, Inc.

Claims language, in the absence of definitions or usage in the specification to the contrary or further refining a definition, have their commonly accepted English Language usage. As used in the claims herein, "generate" (generates, generated) has its commonly accepted definition or usage which means that something is brought into being, created, or started; that is, it does not come from another source. In the pending claims this means

that any and all transaction numbers (identifiers) originate from (are created by) the terminals, not by the central server.

If the Examiner has a preference for a different word, such as "originates", "creates", or other alternative for the currently used "generates", Applicant is very open to an alternate word choice that would be acceptable to the Examiner. For example, would the Examiner prefer "originates"? If so, Applicant will gladly submit an amendment to the claims where "originates" is substituted for "generates".

The OA also states:

> "...wherein each player terminal determines the transaction identification of the voucher and confirm *(sic)* the value of the voucher (col. 6, lines 23-36)..." OA, page 4, first paragraph.

Respectfully, this is an incorrect statement of Burns. The cite from Burns is as follows:

> "...The printer 208 prints a bar code 222 on the cash out slips 220 responsive to the instructions from the CPU 100. The CPU 100 generates the bar code to be printed. The bar code 222 represents the monetary value of the value of the credit stored in the particular slot machine 200 on the cash out slips 220, along with a randomly generated number in order to permit the CPU 100 to verify the validity and unique identification of the cash out slip 220 at a later time. This is necessary since the bar code cash out slip 220 is capable of being inserted as an input into the bar code reader 206. Upon insertion of the cash out slip 220 into the bar code reader 206, the bar code reader 206 transmits a signal to the CPU 100 corresponding to the bar code, and the CPU 100 compares the bar code 222 on the particular cash out ticket with those stored in its memory which contains the value of the cash out slip, the unique identification, and its status. ..."

The Burns cite states that it is the CPU (Burns' central server) that determines the transaction identification, not a player terminal (...The CPU 100 generates the bar code to be printed. The bar code 222 represents the monetary value of the value of the credit ... along with a randomly generated number in order to permit the CPU 100 to verify the validity and unique identification

of the cash out slip 220 at a later time. ... Upon insertion of the cash out slip 220 into the bar code reader 206, the bar code reader 206 transmits a signal to the CPU 100 corresponding to the bar code, and the CPU 100 compares the bar code 222 on the particular cash out ticket with those stored in its memory which contains the value of the cash out slip, the unique identification, and its status. ...). The bar code information is sent to the CPU, and it is the CPU that decodes the encoded information in the bar code and identifies the transaction identifier therein, and then uses it to determine the status of the cash-out ticket thereby. The player terminal does not determine a transaction ID in Burns; it sends the bar code data to the back-end CPU or server. Burns does not disclose or teach that a player terminal can determine a transaction ID.

In summary, Burns does not disclose, teach, or suggest the functionality found in the terminals of the presently claimed invention, nor does the central server of the presently claimed invention function as Burns' central server does; in addition to these distinct elements having different functionalities, the claimed system as a whole has different functional relationships between elements than do those in Burns (e.g., Burns' terminals received transaction IDs already embedded in bar code data from the central server).

There is at least the element in the presently claimed invention that terminals generate transaction IDs on their own (no input or interaction with the central server). This limitation is found in each of the pending independent claims 1, 6, 10 and 12. This is not disclosed or taught in Burns.

Rejection of dependent claims 2-5 depending from independent claim 1, dependent claims 7-9 depending from independent claim 6, dependent claim 11 depending from independent claim 10, and dependent claims 13-15 depending from independent claim 12.

Responding to the OA rejections of the above-listed dependent claims, and without reaching the specific arguments therein, since each dependent claim inherits the elements and limitations from the independent claim from which it depends, and since Applicant believes Applicant has shown each currently pending independent claim has at least one element not shown or taught in Burns (terminals able to generate transaction IDs), then each dependent claim is also patentable in light of Burns.

Overview Summary

Applicant respectfully submits Applicant has shown presently pending claims are patentably distinct over Burns. There is no teaching of the functionality contained in the individual elements of the presently claimed invention (e.g., the generation of transaction identifiers in terminals), and also no teaching of the overall claimed system (all the elements together) in Burns (e.g., the central server receiving transaction identifiers generated outside itself, and using that information to retrievable store the information). Further, the applicant finds no teaching or suggestion to modify any of the elements in Burns which could lead to a successful combination of elements as found in the currently pending claim set.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections thereby, and respectfully requests consideration for allowance.

Conclusion

It is believed that this office action response and amendment is responsive to the OA and places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance. Please feel free to contact the undersigned attorney with any questions to clarify any aspect of this response.

Respectfully submitted,

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